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ABSTRACT

Because European culture is multicultural and multilingual, intercultural education is necessary for migrants and many others. Interculturalism rejects assimilation of minority cultures by dominant national cultures and promotes the need for harmonious integration of peoples with diverse languages and cultures. The report recommends pupil-centered approaches for effective education of migrant children. This strategy should develop a critical consciousness, teach the material conditions of life in society, and assert the individual's identity in this context. Educational and cultural development of migrants should ensure academic success, sound basic training, professional specialization and qualification, and sociocultural and professional advancement. However, research shows a high incidence of academic failure at present among migrant populations, compared with indigenous populations in similar circumstances. Rather than offering a means of advancement, schools tend to reproduce the workforce. Teaching the host country's language, therefore, is a top priority, to be accompanied by study of the pupils' ethnic and cultural characteristics which condition their integration into the educational system. Teaching the language and culture of origin is not necessarily a positive measure; the report examines problems with this approach. The report describes three intercultural experiments that point to strategies involving the larger society and the school in educational projects for migrant youths. The seminar agenda and a list of participants are appended. (DHP)

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The CDCC's Project No. 7:
"The education and cultural development of migrants"

Interculturalism and education

Seminar held in Madrid on 12 and 13 May 1987

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Council for Cultural Co-operation
School Education Division

Strasbourg 1987

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Seminar on "Interculturalism and Education"
organised by the Ministry of Education and Science
Madrid, 1987

SUMMARY

The aim of the seminar on "Interculturalism and Education", held in Madrid in May 1987, was to disseminate the findings of the CDCC's Project Group No. 7.

At the seminar, the general social framework that at present characterises European countries was analysed, the basic concept of interculturalism defined, and current practices and their limitations discussed.

Most of our societies are already multicultural and will become even more so as a result of the increasing ease with which people can travel about. This fact, combined with the assumption that multiculturalism constitutes a potential asset for all groups, means that the introduction of an intercultural approach in schools is now essential.

However, interculturalism cannot bear fruit unless it is set within a legal framework, for indirect forms of social discrimination are at present widespread, and social change can come about only gradually.

According to Project Group No. 7's analyses, social and cultural discrimination against migrants and their children is manifest in European countries and only an overall intercultural policy in the social and educational spheres can remedy this situation.

The case studies and visits carried out by Group No. 7 enabled the concept of intercultural project to be defined in a practical way, even though it was emphasised at the seminar that greater advances had so far been made in the theoretical development of interculturalism.

However, supplementary analysis of situations which, although "intercultural", were failing to produce positive results, enabled the appropriate criteria for intercultural action to be identified. Teacher training, co-operation with the various partners and institutions and innovation both within and outside schools were all emphasised as key aspects of an intercultural education policy.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	4
The intercultural approach	4
Basis and principles of intercultural education	7
The dilemma of academic success and failure	9
Local school systems and the teaching of languages and cultures of origin	11
Intercultural practice	16
Appendix I: Programme	21
Appendix II: List of participants	23

INTRODUCTION

The seminar on "Interculturalism and Education" took place in Madrid on 12 and 13 May 1987 under the auspices of the Council of Europe. It was organised by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. Its participants comprised experts from Group No. 7 and other consultants invited as specialists in interculturalism (see Appendix I). A summary of their contributions appears below.

The aims of the seminar were to analyse and disseminate the findings of the CDCC's Group No. 7 on the Education and Cultural Development of Migrants. The group's experts were not solely concerned with academic aspects or with the age group comprising children and adolescents; they also sought to analyse situations and evaluate experiences concerning adults in all social categories.

The Council of Europe is made up of 21 member states, 18 of which appointed at least one expert to take part regularly in the project, a fact which demonstrates the importance attached to the subject by member states.

The group's work was varied. Among the methods chosen, a special place was reserved for case studies. Member states informed the group of cases they regarded as significant, and these were chosen in such a way as to cover the widest possible range of achievements. Mr Antonio Perotti was responsible for making a review of the 18 case studies in order to identify their most universal features.

Another important methodological approach consisted of a series of visits by the group. At times the proposals made by member states were so wide in scope that a team of experts had to be sent on the spot with a rapporteur; such was the case with the visits to the United Kingdom, Portugal, Austria and Greece. These visits had the same aim as the case studies, viz to see how theory had been combined with practice. Whenever it proved difficult to agree about certain fundamental ideas, the group appointed experts to draw up a basic text. Such texts were then discussed at meetings, and clarifications issued in the light of the discussions.

At the end of the group's work, a symposium was held in The Hague in April 1986.

The group's members also attended several international conferences, training courses and seminars. The Madrid seminar was the tenth such meeting. Its aim was to disseminate the group's findings as widely as possible and further investigate the aspects that continue to be controversial.

THE INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

At the Madrid seminar, the general social framework that at present characterises European countries was analysed, the basic concept of interculturalism defined, and current practices and their limitations discussed.

However, it was at the Council of Europe that Group No. 7 gave the most detailed and lengthy consideration to interculturalism in general and to intercultural education in particular.

Although the need for interculturalism, ie the adoption of an intercultural attitude, is accepted in European society as a theoretical concept, it raises well-known difficulties of a practical nature when it comes to be applied to our educational, political and economic systems.

The provisional report which Louis Porcher, the Chairman of Group No. 7, presented to the CDCC on 1 February 1984 contained a review of the group's work during its first three years of activity, from 1980 to 1983. One of its chapters was devoted to the fundamental question of the relationship between theory and practice. It is true that the principles of intercultural education are widely criticised for being but a theoretical system that offers no practical solutions to the problems of the education of migrants.

At the seminar it was agreed that more progress had been made at the theoretical than at the practical level, in other words via the many schemes carried out in the name of intercultural educational policy. The need for an intercultural policy in the field of education stems from the prospects opening up to European societies as the century draws to its close, which herald important changes and new social dimensions.

The most salient trait is the multicultural and multilingual nature of our society, where ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural minorities coexist with so-called "national" majority cultures whose linguistics and religious components are dominant. Here are a few examples: in London, 151 different languages are spoken; in Brussels, between 15 and 35 separate nationalities can be counted among children in primary schools. This multiculturality stems as much from international migratory movements as from domestic factors, and the different cultural groups which make up the various states also demand their own forms of cultural expression.

Interculturalism, therefore, does not concern just migrants, and intercultural education does not concern only their children. It involves a difficult choice of society in a world which, in order to survive, must opt for interdependence instead of withdrawing into a defensive position. Inevitably, a choice of such magnitude frequently comes up against obstacles inherent in the particular interests of individuals, groups or states. As Louis Porcher says: "Project Group No. 7 does not conceive intercultural education as a scientific reality, a proven fact like the law of gravity or an established body of conceptual knowledge. It has always been represented as an option, that is an avenue to follow, a horizon to seek, a principle of social and educational action, a choice."

This is all the more important as migratory movements are still going on. The principle of free movement of people within the EEC and the need to repopulate European countries owing to the falling birthrate mean that further migration is likely in the immediate future.

In such a context, intercultural education may be seen as a viable and necessary alternative for promoting mutual respect between different ethnic groups who will have to go on living side by side in the different European countries.

As several experts emphasised, problems which are political in origin cannot be confined to the realm of education, which means that decisions taken at the educational level must be regarded as part of an overall migration policy and as a plan for society as a whole.

A characteristic of interculturalism is, then, the condemnation of any attempt to assimilate migrants into the countries they have settled in. The migratory phenomenon throws together people with similarities and differences, and a priori no individual or group is superior to any other and none presents a threat to any other. Such contacts frequently create difficulties, but by its very nature the intercultural approach denotes that no problem created by these contacts is capable of a unilateral solution.

One important aspect of the intercultural option is the conflict-free distinction it makes between the educational situation, the social situation and individual or group identities.

As Mrs Micheline Rey points out, this distinction "has made it possible to advance, with a clearer vision of needs and of the relations between them, towards equality of educational opportunities for children from deprived backgrounds, towards cultural development for parents and adults, and towards recognition and enhancement of the cultures present in a community recognised as multi-ethnic and multicultural and accepted as such" (1).

There are very many obstacles to the adoption of an intercultural policy for education in Europe. The education systems of the different countries have very complex structures: state schools or private schools; national, regional or local administration; centralised or decentralised systems etc. As a result, the actions of the authorities themselves are dispensed and are sometimes lacking in effectiveness. Moreover, the internal linguistic situations of certain countries (Switzerland or Belgium, for example), which are themselves multilingual and multicultural and have solved their own problems in this area through the principle of territoriality and do not wish to jeopardise a delicate balance, are in no way calculated to foster the integration of new linguistic and cultural minorities who, in addition, have no ties with any particular area.

This complex and many-sided situation, a product of history, precludes any action of a general kind. Moreover, an option like interculturalism cannot, by its very nature, be made to work by decree. In the present-day European context, all partners as well as social and educational institutions must be convinced one by one of the importance of intercultural education, which makes the task all the more arduous.

To enact a law is not enough. Certain countries, like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have proclaimed the multicultural character of their education systems; Great Britain's anti-racial legislation should also be mentioned. But British experts have emphasised that while a change

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(1) The Coventry Community Education Project, by Micheline Rey (DECS/EGT (83) 20).

in the law offers an important framework for action, real social change comes only with the passing of time. In order to bring about an effective change of mentality, a large-scale information effort must be made vis-à-vis virtually every member of society. Field work is essential. In every country, social practices and national tensions are such that, to make progress, recourse must be had to unofficial practices or experimental situations which, while preserving national, social and cultural equilibria, allow intercultural schemes to be established little by little.

In order to obtain equality of opportunity for migrant minorities in our present-day society, it is not enough to prohibit social discrimination; we must also fight against the indirect forms of discrimination which stem from social relations and place an obstacle in the way of respect for migrants' rights. As the British experts pointed out, we must go even further by practising discrimination in favour of the more under-privileged sections of society in order to ensure genuine equality of opportunity.

BASIS AND PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Interculturalism is a weapon for combating intolerance and xenophobia. For that reason Group No. 7 opted for an overall approach and concerned itself not only with educational aspects but with the whole cultural development of migrants.

The concept of interculturality as developed by the group is different from that of interethnicity. Culture is a wider concept which goes beyond ethnic considerations. Ethnic characteristics are important, but the characteristics stemming from each individual's membership of a culture make the problem more complex and universal.

Since, as mentioned earlier, most of our societies are multicultural, and as the growing ease of travel will accentuate this situation, multiculturalism must be regarded as a potential asset for all groups involved.

Interculturalism rejects the assimilation of minority cultures by dominant national cultures and underlines the need for harmonious integration of this linguistic and cultural diversity. Interculturalism can thus be seen as a voluntary option which enables the potential conflicts of a multicultural society to be surmounted. It is a principle of action consisting of reciprocal recognition of different cultures and their interactions. The interdependence of groups obliged to live side by side is fundamental. Between different social groups there is always a relationship of domination, and it is important that cultures scorned by the official majorities should be granted a recognised status. There are no unilateral solutions for coexisting in harmony.

As Mr Leurin emphasised, an appreciation of any human group's ethnocentrism should lead every humanitarian person to stop taking refuge in his own social culture and make an unprejudiced comparison of the various cultures around him. In this way he will get to know his neighbours better and eventually come to recognise them and accept their otherness. Only when these other people's identities have been recognised can they fit into their new society, benefit from what it has

to offer them and, in turn, enrich it with their own contributions. And not only will each member of society come to know his fellow members better; he will also come to know himself better. It is only by comparing and contrasting that we are able to perceive our own characteristics. This is the only possible way of ensuring that, in our societies, the various social and ethnic groups involved in a relationship of domination will avoid alienating individuals as a consequence of the majority's ethnocentrism.

From this standpoint, apparent cultural hierarchies may be seen to have no rational foundation. They are the result of an economic relationship which encourages a scornful attitude towards the culture of those who perform less prestigious jobs and gives undue weight to the culture of those who are in power. It is senseless to establish a hierarchy of cultures that merely reflect a certain group's way of life at a given time and place. Cultures interact quite naturally as soon as they come into contact with one another, and the rejection of this interaction can lead to conflicting situations. In an intercultural society, there is neither a hierarchy nor any condescending paternalism but rather an effort of synthesis, an interpenetration.

The question that arises then, as Mr Leurin pointed out, is whether the intercultural concept implies cross-breeding. The definition of an intercultural society given by Mr Perotti in his "Short Anthropological and Sociological Glossary of Immigration Terms" (1) provides an interesting basis for a reply: "This is the object of a political strategy which takes as its basis cultural pluralism (which already exists in society, but is confined to the juxtaposition of cultures and to efforts to increase the status of the cultures of ethnic groups). The strategy is to promote a new synthesis of cultures. In contrast to a melting pot, in which the various cultural models merge together with loss of personal identity, and in contrast to the cosmopolitanism fostered by the international cultural assets market, the strategy of producing a "new synthesis of cultures" entails devising original models based on the cultures present but not confined to any one of them and grafting these onto the basic national culture, which will thereby be enhanced and given new life."

Education and, hence, schools have an important role to play in this field. Educational strategies developed for migrant children have shown that in order to make teaching more effective it must be based on the children's own experience.

The adoption of a pupil-centred approach to education in a multicultural environment necessarily leads to the accommodation of a wide variety of individual needs and interests and to a comparison between them. These strategies should develop a critical consciousness, teach the process of the material conditions of life in our society and assert the individual's identity in this context.

It can be said that a People's Europe will be created in those schools which practise the intercultural method of education and that this is one of the means of ensuring mutual respect and greater social equality in our societies.

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(1) Final report of Project Group No. 7 - Strasbourg, 1986 (DECS/EGT (86) 6 final)

THE DILEMMA OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND FAILURE

In spite of the many experiments being carried out in every country, however valuable they may be, it is obvious that education systems and institutions are having a great deal of difficulty in progressing towards authentic educational and cultural development of the migrant population. This is also in spite of various legal provisions, such as EEC Directive No. 486/77 of July 1977, by which the EEC member states undertake to respect certain conditions and priorities in this field. Other texts may also be mentioned, such as Resolution No. 1 of May 1983 of the Dublin session of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education or the Recommendation adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in September 1984 on the training of teachers in education for intercultural understanding.

As Mr Pino and Mr Perez emphasised, the educational and cultural development of migrants should ensure, in the same way as for the remainder of the population:

- academic success with a sound basic training;

- professional specialisation and qualification (without excluding university training);

- socio-professional and socio-cultural advancement.

These conditions will secure the preservation and enhancement of a culture, language and system of values, because it is in that way that groups and individuals will be enabled to occupy a real place in social life.

Only when these conditions are fulfilled can migrant populations play an active and effective intercultural role which supports their own cultural identity and expresses their respect and understanding for the host society's system of values.

As Mr Pino pointed out, considerable disparities in the form of a high incidence of academic failure are at present to be observed among migrant populations compared with indigenous populations in similar circumstances. To quote an example from one country (of which there are many parallels in the other countries), let us take the case of Belgium as presented to the seminar in the light of a survey carried out by the Belgian Ministry of Education. The survey is referred to in Annette Evrard's book: "250 000 enfants d'immigrés dans nos écoles : quel avenir pour eux ?" (Louvain-La Neuve, 1983).

Among children in the last year of primary education, 10.9% of those whose parents were in the managerial category had had to repeat a class at least once, whereas the figure for the children of skilled workers was 36%, for the children of unskilled workers 43%, for the children of immigrants born in Belgium 51% and for the children of immigrants born abroad 70%. It can thus be seen that being born in Belgium is an advantage for children being educated in the country and that children who were born abroad stand considerably less chance of succeeding.

Repeating a class and academic backwardness go hand in hand with different orientations at secondary level. Academic backwardness, which increases in geometric progression at secondary level, greatly affects the choice of courses, which become highly specialised at an intermediate level and in pupils directed towards employment - or unemployment - as unskilled workers.

The case of the Netherlands is similar and, according to information from Luxembourg, the situation there is as follows:

School level	% Foreign population
Pre-school	37.8%
Primary	31.8%
Secondary	13.7%

The figures given during the seminar apply to the other European countries.

This situation is preventing migrants from making any real progress up the social ladder. Almost from the beginning of the educational process, schools push the weakest pupils to the sidelines. Examples were quoted of a tendency to make even pre-school pupils repeat a class because of a lack of maturity. Obviously, consideration should be given to the role that schools play in educational failure and to ways of improving this situation. Alas, as everyone knows, there is no miracle solution (reference was made at the seminar to the failure of the compensatory programmes tried out in the United States).

At present, rather than offering them a means of advancement, schools tend to prevent second-generation migrants from rising above their parents' lowly socio-professional status, even though the whole of their schooling occurs in the host country where they were born. In two OECD reports of 1981 and 1983 entitled "Young Foreigners and the World of Work" and "The Children of Emigrants and Employment in European Countries", the following figures are quoted: 90% of men and 60-75% of women in the migrant population enter the occupational sphere as unskilled workers.

This information clearly shows the role of educational institutions in reproducing the workforce, a phenomenon that affects not only the migrant population but also the more socio-culturally deprived strata of our societies. The educational handicaps of migrant children are, then, considerable and academic success in the host country is crucial to their occupational future and socio-cultural integration. Top priority must therefore be given to education in the host country and particularly to the teaching of the host country's language in view of its great educational importance.

LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF ORIGIN

The immigrant children most prone to academic failure are, as we have just seen, those who were born outside the host country, but even those born in the host country are also liable to encounter difficulties. Schools are selective, and such children find themselves barred from certain courses of studies. How does this exclusion mechanism operate? There are many factors, as Mr Pino pointed out, and they are becoming more and more numerous.

Language is the first obstacle. There are gaps in such pupils' knowledge both of the host country's language and of the language of origin, and neither schools nor any other institutions deal with this problem. Ordinary curricula are not suited to the actual circumstances of a school's pupils, who may be mostly of migrant origin. The culture imparted by schools reflects the host country's scale of values, conceptions, habits and religions. Educational and vocational orientation responds to the variables of the education system and is incomprehensible to migrant parents. The conditions of family life, whether they relate to housing, cultural values, parental training, leisure activities or social relationships, have no connection with the social reality of the host country. Professional aspirations for the future are limited. Finally, the schools attended by such pupils are overcrowded ones in working-class areas where the prevailing habits and inertia make academic success a difficult goal.

There are certain important duties which schools cannot neglect when tackling the education of pupils entrusted to them. Their approach to education must be based on actual conditions, even if these are meagre, and on the pupils' potentialities - individual factors, family factors and socio-cultural factors. They must allow for the real nature of the educational process by bearing in mind the limits of the role that the family and social group can play in a child's development.

Schools should not evaluate in a selective or deterministic way the gaps of pupils who are socio-culturally handicapped by their family environment, especially when the standards and criteria of educational evaluation ought to be reviewed. Nor should schools disguise their pupils' limitations in order to compensate for their socio-cultural handicaps of a social or family origin by keeping the pupils in a situation of failure. Indeed, they should denounce such situations and demand socio-political action at other levels.

In spite of the criticism at present levelled against the compensatory educational schemes that were highly fashionable in the 1960s as a means of correcting socio-cultural handicaps and remedying the gaps characteristic of the more deprived sections of society, it would be desirable if compensatory educational action by schools, accompanied by efforts from other institutions in support of pupils at family, social and cultural levels, could bring about a reduction in foreseeable academic failures. It is by solving these practical problems which stem from educational institutions themselves and preclude any real social advancement for migrants that the necessary conditions can be created to ensure a genuine cultural exchange through the interaction of different values and languages.

What do schools generally do with regard to the migrant population or any other minority groups? As Mr Leurin stressed, concerned as they are that their classes should be homogeneous (however mythical that concept may be), they count on the acculturation of all the children in their charge, whatever the official line may be on the goals of education - autonomy, responsibility, a social sense, curiosity, willingness to experiment etc. Moreover, school work is organised on the basis of syllabuses and timetables, almost entirely in terms of cognitive norms. And what happens to pupils who "lag behind"? An attempt is made to bring them up to scratch by means of special coaching. If this fails, the attempt is abandoned, and the pupils are transferred to "special education", which will do whatever it can with them.

In those schools and states which have the greatest desire to adjust to the influx of foreign children, measures have been taken which have always followed the same path. At the outset, ignorance of the language of instruction has always been considered the only obstacle to the assimilation of migrant children. In order to enable them to benefit fully from compulsory education, is it really the best solution to group them together temporarily in initiation or adaptation classes for intensive language tuition?

To begin with, the tuition is given in a makeshift manner by staff untrained for the purpose. It is soon realised that the methods used for teaching the mother tongue are not suitable for such pupils. So then audio-visual aids to the learning of a foreign language are resorted to, only for it to be discovered that their cultural content is far removed from the everyday lives of the pupils.

Next, teams of the keener and more energetic teachers produce audio-visual kits based on the pupils' real-life situations in the hope that, for obvious economic reasons, they can later be used with other pupils. It is soon realised that this is a forlorn hope; that cultural relevance is not enough to make the messages effective; and that what ensures the best results for the effort expended is material based on the pupils' own experiences. And that is the very point at which intercultural education starts; for a child-centred education in a multicultural environment necessarily leads to awareness of a great diversity of individual needs and interests and to a comparison between them.

What distinguishes the earlier approaches is their normative aspect and their one-sidedness: the newcomers must be changed so as to fall into line with the norms of the national education system. In other words, they must be assimilated.

As soon as education becomes concerned with learners' linguistic, psychological and social needs, it discovers that it must take account of specific characteristics that it had previously ignored. These include ethnic characteristics, of course, but also characteristics due to each pupil's membership of a sub-culture which conditions his integration into the education system and hence his success there. Over and above their pupils' cultures, schools are led to analyse the cultures they themselves transmit, through their books and through their ways and customs.

All experts stress the importance of learning languages, both host language and the language of origin. In this context, the function of lessons in the language and culture of origin may be called in question.

It is not obvious that the teaching of the language and culture of origin fits readily into an intercultural approach. Such teaching raises many problems.

The EEC's directive of 1977 was drawn up after the outbreak of an economic crisis. Its underlying philosophy is that of the 1970's. Against a background of recession, it proclaims, on one hand, the right to be taught the host country's language in order to make subsequent integration easier and, on the other, the right to be taught the language of origin in order to facilitate a return to the home country. In neither case is there any intercultural approach. Migrants' children are separate and should be "normalised" in the two possible cases: on-the-spot integration and return to the country of origin.

For that reason Group No. 7 considered that the teaching of languages and cultures of origin was not necessarily a positive measure. There are two main problems: that of the organisation and content of such teaching and that of the results. When the teaching is "deferred" (the French term), "parallel" (the Belgian term) or "extracurricular" (the EEC term), it places on the pupils a burden that can hinder their ordinary academic progress and even their general development. Nor is it enough for a lesson to take place during normal school hours for it to be ipso facto integrated into the timetable. When a teacher comes to take his young compatriots away from a class and off to another room to teach them his language and culture while the others go on with their normal activities, these language and culture classes do not form an integral part of the curriculum, but are merely an additional activity. And there is all the less reason to speak of intercultural education in such cases.

It would therefore be better to drop the term "integrated lessons" in the case of lessons merely occurring during school hours and to use the term "inserted lessons" instead. There would then be in ascending degrees of incorporation:

- extra curricular lessons: held outside the normal timetable of pupils as a whole (whether or not on school premises);

- inserted lessons: held during normal school hours but merely as an additional activity;

- integrated lessons held during normal school hours as an integral part of the whole range of activities.

Moreover, while timetabling obviously plays an important role, more important still is the content of such lessons. Article 3 of the EEC's directive speaks about promoting the teaching of the mother tongue.

As Mr Leurin pointed out, "mother tongue" is a very glib expression. In many migrant families, the spoken language differs greatly from the official language of the country of origin. Can this official language be called the mother tongue of the children of such families? And what is the mother tongue of young Turkish children born in Belgium who, when playing together in the street, express themselves not in Turkish but in French even though their parents still speak Turkish at home?

The same Article 3 refers to promoting the culture of countries of origin.

To what extent is it legitimate to speak of a country's culture? A culture manifests itself in many different ways, according to social level, geography etc. Moreover, it is wrong to use the phrase "culture of the country of origin" in reference to children born abroad.

A state's educational institutions, through their choice of curricula, methods and structures, eliminates the culture of groups which are economically, socially, or numerically dominated. The members of such groups have no alternative but to be assimilated into the dominant culture or rejected through academic failure.

It is thus clear that the intercultural approach is necessary not only between migrants and the indigenous population and that the practising of an intercultural education between and within states must be based on people as they actually are, not upon the imaginary beings to which there is a temptation to reduce them (education centred on the "learner").

Most language and culture lessons are aimed at children of between 6 and 12 years old. Why is so little done at pre-school level?

Assuredly, one won't miss saying that the resources are not inexhaustible and choices must be made. Experience shows, however, the assistance of a compatriot, especially for children completely unfamiliar with the necessary school language can be psychologically very beneficial and indeed crucial to their adjustment to the school environment. There is no need to stress the linguistic benefit that can be derived. Numerous studies underline the results achieved by the early study of languages.

Is the methodological approach suited to a situation where some pupils are conversant with the language being taught, whereas others do not understand it at all? In the former case the aim is to add to the rudiments of knowledge already acquired. The only difficulty here is that pupils learn the language in an environment where the methodology is scarcely different from that used by teachers in their own countries. In the latter case - which is that of an increasing number of immigrant children, the so-called second and third-generation immigrants - the pupils study a language foreign to them and, what is more, in a country where it is hardly spoken. This sort of work demands special methods which cannot be improvised.

Are language and culture lessons, aimed exclusively or mainly at strengthening pupils' ties with their own or their parents' countries of origin, compatible with the intercultural option? This question calls for a carefully qualified reply.

With regard, first of all, to the relevance of such an aim, it should be stressed that the aim has no intrinsic value and deserves no consideration except as a means of creating a balanced personality rooted in a stable and meaningful environment serving as an anchorage.

Next, with regard to the child's age when he arrives in the host country, the ground in which he puts down his roots will be a neighbourhood or or a village rather than a whole country. Exposing him to the culture of his parent's country of origin may fail to cater for his emotional needs just as much as assimilating him into the standard culture of the host country's education system.

In short, action in this field ought to be geared to pupils' needs so as to fill any gaps and forestall the dangers of a cultural void.

At the seminar, the subject of language and culture lessons also arose in other discussions - in particular, in a discussion concerning the results of a study carried out in the Netherlands by Mr Perez. The education service of the Dutch Embassy attempted to assess the different degrees of proficiency achieved in written Spanish by pupils attending language and culture classes after five and eight years of study. This was an evaluation of performance in the most important sectors of written language.

It should be explained that the Dutch education system is intercultural by law, that langauge and culture lessons are integrated into the school timetable and that syllabuses are drawn up at local level. Such an evaluation is therefore of special interest to us.

The findings were as follows:

1. The intercultural model does not seem to have been successful in neutralising factors determining the structure of educational orientation. Most of the pupils are still at the lowest and least privileged levels of Dutch secondary education.

2. With regard to the practical organisation of these integrated classes, the criteria used are clearly not the best.

3. The results obtained are better after five years' study of Spanish than after eight years' study. It is difficult to say why. It could be because the difficulty and complexity of syllabuses increase from one school level to another, or perhaps because the pupils are at an age (pre-adolescence) where they begin to show a more critical attitude and often indeed an attitude of rejection towards the language of origin.

4. In practical terms, performance in the learning of the mother tongue is not very different from that observed in other socio-linguistic studies on the preservation and loss of ethnic minority languages.

This survey calls in the question of the validity of language and culture lessons, as well as the structure and content of such tuition as currently practised. Mr Singh, in particular, pointed out that it showed not so much the result of a given course of studies as the result of a general approach to language teaching.

What is really the best way to learn a language? A language should be learned in the context where it is going to be used. At school, language is not taught in a way that enables pupils to use it later.

Naturally, therefore, there arises the problem of the true role and function of schools, for while schools are not perfect in their teaching of languages, they are after all the best places for the purpose.

It is true that a child comes to school already in possession of a linguistic and cultural background and that part of the learning process goes on outside school, particularly in the family. And this dichotomy between school and family is doubtless a fundamental obstacle to the academic success of migrants. Failure to master a language is the result not only of a certain type of teaching but also of a general conception of language teaching.

In any event, the teaching of languages should be placed in a wider context. Schools enjoy a certain independence and can undertake innovations of their own which enable them to solve many problems. It is all a question of priorities. Education should reflect a more comprehensive approach, and if, as already pointed out, rejection of the culture of origin is linked to the development of a child's critical faculty, the cultural tensions he is subjected to must be overcome.

As Mr Essinger stated, educational strategies should be aimed at developing a pupil's critical consciousness. Immigrant pupils, like indigenous ones, must learn to find their place in society. By acquiring this consciousness, they cease to feel socially alienated and become freed from prejudice and discrimination, which allows them to assert their own identity and find fresh motivations. Schools should help pupils pursue this educational process so as to obtain better linguistic and academic results.

Intercultural education seems the only way of overcoming the handicap of school selection, failure and social exclusion. It is by recognising the value of all cultural expressions and by creating harmony in social relations that the foundations of a new way approach to school education may be laid.

INTERCULTURAL PRACTICE

At the seminar, the conditions necessary for effective intercultural practice were identified. Even though the concept of interculturalism has been accepted by European countries and has already been embodied in some countries' legislation, there are still many difficulties of a practical nature.

If one cultural group finds itself in a flagrant position of cultural and social inequality, as it's the case at the moment with migrants, it is difficult to speak of any real intercultural relations. As we have seen, moreover, it can hardly be said that an intercultural society exists when no practical results are obvious (as in the case of the Dutch school system). Since any intercultural action has a political dimension, a reform of the structures and institutions is indispensable.

It is therefore clear that, in order to create genuine intercultural relations, any course of action must comply with certain criteria. There must be a common plan: working together is a prerequisite of any intercultural action.

The criteria of intercultural practice were highlighted by Mr Perotti, who presented three highly positive examples of intercultural experiments analysed by Project Group No. 7:

- the link between the cultural option, community relations and community development (a concern for such development and for improving community relations is, incidentally, an important part of other Council of Europe projects).

- the linking together and co-ordination of the greatest number of participants (human and material resources, private organisations, public institutions).

- the link between grassroots action and the role of institutions.

In the light of these criteria, Mr Perotti chose three experiments: the Frais-Vallon project (Marseilles), the Canton of Zürich project (Switzerland) and the Coventry Community Education project (England). These projects go well beyond the field of education. Rather than confine themselves to intra-school innovation, they propose a strategy for reforming schools by opening them up to the outside world - in other words, through social interculturality. These two paths - internal and external innovation - are complementary.

In these experiments, the school is one of the partners and interculturalism is rooted in the social fabric of the community. The school becomes the venue for permanent education and allows numerous relations to be established with the environment (neighbourhood, family, associations and other institutions).

In this way an important aspect of interculturalism is enhanced, namely a conflict-free distinction between the school situation, the social situation and any individual or group identities.

The Frais-Vallon project (Marseilles)

This case could serve as a model for any project aimed, on the one hand, at collaboration between a school and its neighbourhood and, on the other, at the choice of a strategy based on the setting up of action and relay networks between schools, families, communities and institutions.

In 1976, the authorities undertook a vast programme of rehabilitation of the large Frais-Vallon housing estate, aimed not only at renovating the blocks of flats but also at injecting new life into the neighbourhood. While this was being done, they sought the Ministry of Education's collaboration, thinking that the local school might become an ideal framework for involving the neighbourhood and families through their children as well as a focal point for the permanent education required for the renewal of the district's social fabric.

The school/neighbourhood co-operation project was drawn up by the CEFISEM-CEFREM team (information and training centres for the education of migrants' children).

The operation was launched by the establishment of contacts with all social workers, education administrators and teachers, followed by the holding of a course for the 60 teachers of the six nursery and primary schools.

In collaboration with several social centres, some workshops were opened for the purpose not only of development but also of participation and the contribution of knowledge.

The opening up of the school to the surrounding neighbourhood is also being effected by the organisation of cultural visits, participation in local festivals and collaboration with parents in the workshops.

Ever since the authorities and the school began to show an interest in the environment and opportunities were given to local residents, especially children, to exert a real influence on the environment, acts of vandalism have decreased substantially in number.

The Canton of Zürich project (Switzerland)

This is based on co-operation between schools and migrant parents in an educational project carried out by their children as well as on relations between parents' associations and schools in the canton. At the centre of this experiment there is a well co-ordinated network of associations of Italian immigrants living in an area with a heavy concentration of Italian residents. The Italian children attending schools in the canton had a high rate of educational failure as illustrated by the large proportion of them in special classes for pupils having academic difficulties, the large number of them who had to repeat a school year and their massive presence in low-level secondary schools leading to jobs needing no recognised professional qualifications.

At the instance of parents grouped together in (albeit unofficial) associations and the various Educational Information Centres, a psychologist carried out tests of his own on Italian pupils whom educational psychologists had relegated to the special classes. The use of non-verbal tests and of the Italian language overturned the original results, and the pupils were thus allowed to appeal against the first decision and be reinstated in the ordinary classes.

Thanks to a subtle and tenacious information campaign carried out by the Centres among educational psychologists and teachers, the validity and usefulness of the action taken have been recognised. The number of pupils directed towards the special classes has been considerably reduced.

The experiment clearly shows how opening up schools to the outside world can bring about a renovation of their internal practices. Taking account of the various conceptions and expressions of schools involves reviewing the criteria of socio-ethnocentric evaluation and widening the relevant norms.

The Coventry Community Education project (England)

Aimed at the whole of a territorial community, this project is centred on the linking together and co-ordination of institutions and the various educational and social partners.

Coventry is an industrial city with 340,000 inhabitants which, ever since the war, has had a large immigrant population mainly from Ireland, Asia (India and Pakistan) and the West Indies. The inner city schools have between 50% and 80% immigrant children.

The project is focused on the educational field and involves five focal points: a teachers' centre (further training establishment open to all the city's primary and secondary teachers), a minority group support service (teams of peripatetic teachers of English), community education centres (of which there are five, their aim being to stimulate co-operation between schools and parents, especially mothers), community primary schools (numbering two, with a programme of out-of-school activities, leisure pursuits and adult education) and community secondary schools (there are five of these, with numerous activities for all ages from 9 am to 10.30 pm).

In addition, the Coventry project can call on two other services which are administered at national level but have a regional branch in the city. These are the industrial language training courses and a "home-tutoring language service for adults and parental education".

The Coventry project is therefore noteworthy because, first of all, it does not confine its aims to immigrants but covers the whole community and, secondly, because it has managed to avoid reducing immigrants to an under-privileged status and concert the various efforts to reform schools not only by opening them up to the surrounding neighbourhood but also by updating their curricula.

Finally, it must be emphasised that, as these experiments show, teacher training is of the utmost importance for achieving success in intercultural education.

Mrs Micheline Rey pointed out that teacher training was one of the Council of Europe's main concerns and referred to the results of the work done on the subject by a permanent working party (1977-83).

Teacher training in an intercultural context should not be restricted to teachers who have migrants' children in their classes but should be aimed at all teachers, for the intercultural dimension should pervade all educational activities, not just isolated sectors, otherwise the result might be the creation of ghettos.

In order to ensure that such training is carried out in a positive way, the whole of the educational community should be made aware of the relevant problems. The responsibility of teacher trainers and education authorities is thus very great.

Intercultural training concerns every teacher. It does not replace training in educational methodology; one should guide the other. Intercultural training gives a new dimension to knowledge, experience and life since it is concerned with learning to live with people of different cultures.

Both the indigenous and the immigrant population should take part in a common form of training. Everyone has something to learn; and a teacher, before transmitting his message to his pupil, should be quite clear what interculturalism consists of.

Intercultural training has three main aims:

- to provide conceptual tools (making correct interpretations and learning several codes and norms),

- to provide methodological tools,

- to provide educational tools and show how to evaluate them.

The idea is not to evaluate the quality of this or that object but to develop strategies for transforming one's ideas of other people, transforming the value one attaches to certain cultures and facilitating the breaking down of barriers.

As was often repeated at the seminar, interculturality proposes a new cultural synthesis which will allow conflicts between different cultural groups to be avoided. It is a means of combating racism, developing human rights, creating harmony in community relations and thereby strengthening democracy and bringing about a People's Europe.

A P P E N D I X I

PROGRAMME

The seminar was organised and co-ordinated by Mr Juan de Luis Camblor, Technical Adviser, Department of International Co-operation, Ministry of Education and Science, Spain.

LECTURES

Opening session: Mr Segovia, Chairman of Education Promotion, Ministry of Education and Science, Spain

** BASIS AND PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Mr Leurin, Ministry of Education, Belgium
Mr Pino, Education Attaché, Belgium

** PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT CASE STUDIES WITH AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE, CARRIED OUT IN COUNTRIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Mr Perotti, Consultant to the Council of Europe

** DEBATE

** INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Mr Perez, Education Attaché, Netherlands

** RETURN TO THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND PRESERVATION OF THE LANGUAGE LEARNED ABROAD

Mr Schmidtke, Professor, University of Oldenburg

** INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

Mrs Rey, Department of Education, Geneva

** DEBATE

ROUND TABLE

** EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF IMMIGRATION IN THE MULTICULTURAL CHARACTER OF THE VARIOUS NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Moderator: Mr Alfonso Berlanga, Department of Education Abroad, Spain

Participants: Mr Carranza, Education Attaché, United Kingdom
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Mr Delgado, Education Attaché, France
Mr Essinger, Professor, Free University of Berlin
Mr Leurin, Ministry of Education, Belgium
Mr Medina, Education Attaché, Federal Republic of Germany

Mr Perez, Education Attaché, Netherlands
Mr Perotti, Consultant to the Council of Europe
Mr Pino, Education Attaché, Belgium
Mrs Rey, Department of Education, Geneva
Mr Rodriguez, Education Attaché, Switzerland
Mr Schmidtke, Professor, University of Oldenburg
Mr Singh, Ministry of Education, United Kingdom
Mrs Ramdeen, Inspector for multiethnic education, London
Mr Wittek, Consultant to the EEC

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT

General Rapporteur: Mrs Olmos

FINAL SESSION

DISTRIBUTION

- Programme Directors of the Provincial Directorates
- Programme Directors of the Autonomous Governments
- Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Final Report of Project Group No. 7 (DECS/EGT (86) 6 final)

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